

We want to also encourage people to have health insurance by allowing more trade associations to give health insurance options to their members because small businesses are not able to afford health care costs. If they are able to afford them, they are suffering even more. We are hearing of more small businesses that are dropping health care coverage for their employees because of the high cost of health care. So we are going to be doing some things that would benefit the States.

The President's package is a good one. It is a bold package, and it is a package that will stimulate our economy. If people know they are going to have money in their pockets, even if it is next year or the following year, they can plan. That is the key—being able to know what the Tax Code is, so people can plan accordingly and know what their savings are going to do.

So I applaud the President. I think he has been visionary in not sitting back and saying: I cannot do anything; we are going to let the market take its course. He is watching the stock market. He is watching the jobless rate. He is concerned about it. I have talked to him. He is very concerned about people who do not have jobs. It is probably the largest concern he has right now in addition to national defense and trying to make sure we make the right decisions in national defense for the security of our country. These are the two most important issues we are facing. So the President is trying to do something about them. He is trying to stabilize the market, give people more money to spend, and encourage corporations to make the capital investments that would create more jobs.

I applaud the President. I am going to support him, and I am going to do everything I can to see that we do not have rhetoric that says this is class versus class. This is for everyone. This is for more jobs. It is for more money to spend for people who are working and who deserve to keep more of the money they earn.

I yield the floor.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the time for morning business be extended until noon and the time be equally divided in the usual form with Senators allowed to speak for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

HIV/AIDS FUNDING

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, I rise this morning to draw my colleagues' attention once again to an issue that is plaguing our world. That issue, of course, is the tragic global HIV/AIDS endemic.

The Los Angeles Times newspaper ran a particularly heartbreaking piece this past Sunday that detailed the HIV/

AIDS crisis in Africa. I will take a moment to read an excerpt from this article, as it paints a very disturbing and very accurate picture of the reality of this global HIV/AIDS crisis. This is last Sunday's Los Angeles Times:

The mother rises from her deathbed to bury her baby boy. She slumps in a wheelchair borrowed for the occasion, and an elderly relative must help hold her head up so that she can watch the body descend into the red earth.

The casket is heartbreakingly small, and though Evelyn Matule weeps for her child, her eyes are dry. Sickness and despair have stolen her tears.

Alfred is the second boy Matule has lost in a year to a disease also racking her body: AIDS. A toddler's coffin is mercifully inexpensive, but the earlier death left Matule and her family so strapped that they will serve only butter sandwiches to the few guests.

On one side of the boy's grave in this township outside the city of Welkom in central South Africa are fresh heaps of loam, each new grave marked with numbered aluminum tags, baby rattles and prescription bottles for remedies that didn't save the victims. A dozen open graves lie to the right. In less than a month, they will be full.

Mr. President, this is the reality of AIDS. Today, one in every nine South Africans—that's 4.7 million people—has AIDS. Last year alone, 2.4 million people in sub-Saharan Africa died from AIDS. Furthermore, over 34 million children worldwide have lost one or both parents to AIDS or related causes.

As the LA Times article points out, the City of Johannesburg is expecting to have 70,000 burials a year by 2010—that's up from 15,000 burials just five years ago.

This is having a huge economic impact on the African Continent, both in terms of a reduced agricultural capacity and also just in terms of the costs of burials and funerals. As morbid as it may sound, there is, quite literally, a shortage of undertakers and cemetery space in Africa, and it is adding to an already tragic health crisis.

As we all know, Mr. President, HIV/AIDS is a global problem, with a huge impact and devastating impact in our own Hemisphere. I have seen it in Haiti, a nation with the second highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS in the world—second only to sub-Saharan Africa. My wife, Fran, and I have traveled to Haiti nearly ten times—and we are planning another trip for next week. We have seen, first-hand, the devastation of HIV/AIDS—we've seen the children, the babies, and the families. It is a true human tragedy.

An estimated 300,000 Haitians—and that is out of a population of only 8 million—are currently living with AIDS. According to the Centers for Disease Control projections, Haiti will experience up to 44,000 new HIV/AIDS cases this year. That is at least 4,000 more than the number expected in the United States, a nation with a population nearly 35 times larger than Haiti's.

This disease is having a profoundly devastating impact on Haitian chil-

dren. Already, estimates suggest that HIV/AIDS has orphaned 163,000 children in Haiti, a number expected to skyrocket to between 323,000 to 393,000 over the next 10 years. Haiti also continues to suffer from an unbelievably high HIV transmission rate from mother to child, and, of course, two-thirds of the infants born with the disease, we know, will die within the first year.

This truly is a tragedy because we know that the transmission of HIV from mother to child can be substantially reduced with proper counseling and proper medication. The reality is that millions of children are dying, and we can do something about it. We must do something about this.

I was pleased, to join my friend and colleague from Illinois, Senator DURBIN, in leading an effort to show the Senate Appropriations Committee our support for increasing funds to combat this horrible disease. In a letter to the Committee signed by fourteen fellow Senators, we have asked for the full appropriation of \$236.4 million in additional FY03 funds to fight global AIDS. This would bring our nation's total 2003 AIDS spending level to \$1.5 billion—that's a 50 percent increase over 2002 levels.

Furthermore, I look forward to working with Majority Leader FRIST and Senator SANTORUM in the coming months to not only increase our overall contribution to fight global AIDS, but to work to ensure that our funds are being spent in the most efficient and effective ways.

At the end of the day, I believe that all of us in this Chamber are working toward the same objective—and that is to alleviate the continued suffering caused by this epidemic.

Quite simply, we have a moral obligation to do so, and I believe we must show the leadership by tackling the problem in our backyard and around the world. I thank all of my colleagues who have come to this Chamber in the past to talk about this issue and show their support for dealing with this problem. We must continue to act. I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Jersey.

THE PRESIDENT'S STIMULUS PLAN

Mr. CORZINE. Mr. President, I come to the floor this morning to speak once again on last week's proposals by the President with regard to the so-called stimulus plan. I think this is one of the very most important things we need to be debating right here on the Senate floor.

As the President and most of the Members of the Senate know, we just had another announcement of unemployment last week. We are at an 8-year high, 6 percent. We lost another 100,000 jobs in December. The number of people who are going on long-term unemployment without unemployment benefits is roughly 100,000 a week. Our